

# Prototype Howitzers arrive

## Marine Corps received new light weight 155 mm Howitzers for testing

The Marine Corps took delivery of the first of eight XM777 lightweight (LW) 155mm engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) prototype howitzers in June. Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited (now part of BAE systems) of England is building all eight EMD prototypes.

The XM777 LW 155mm howitzer is a joint Marine Corps/Army program where the Corps funds the howitzer research, development, and testing, while the Army funds the research, development, and testing of the XM777's digital fire control system called Towed Artillery Digitization.

The XM777 will replace the aging, much heavier, M198 155mm howitzer, in the Operating Forces.

The Corps intends to buy 450 XM777s to provide close and deep fire support for its maneuver forces.

At just 9,000 pounds, the XM777 will provide considerably more flexibility than the current 16,000-pound M198, to include increased rates of fire, decreased emplacement and displacement times, and is CH-53E and MV-22 transportable.

The lighter weight is achieved through lower trunnion height and the use of high-strength, corrosion-resistant titanium, a primary component of the lower carriage and cradle assembly. The cannon tube is a derivative of the U.S.-made M284 and M199 cannon tubes and is ballistically similar to the M199 cannon tube, providing the range of the current M198 howitzer.

The first four XM777s will undergo development testing at Yuma, Ariz.; Aberdeen, Md.; Dugway, Proving Grounds, Utah; and Twentynine Palms, Calif.

The final four howitzers, set to be delivered early next year, will be used for operational testing at Twentynine Palms; Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.; and

Fort Greely, Alaska.

Initial fielding of the XM777 is scheduled for late 2003.



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